

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02115 140853Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----007981 140858Z /14

O 140755Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7615
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T BEIRUT 2115

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR PBOR LE IS
SUBJ: LEBANON; PELION UPON OSSA

1. CALLED ON SARKIS AND BOUTROS AT PRESIDENTIAL PALACE AT 1700
APRIL 13 AT THEIR REQUEST. WALKED OVER FROM RESIDENCE AND AT
BOUTROS' REQUEST ENTERED BY BACK DOOR TO AVOID PRESS. FOUND TWO
MEN SUNK IN GLOOM AS SOUND OF HEAVY FIRING FROM SUBURBS DOWN
BELOW CAME THROUGH CLEARLY. THEY ASKED FOR MY VIEW OF WHAT HAD
HAPPENED AND SUGGESTIONS AS TO WHAT THEY SHOULD DO NEXT. I
SUMMARIZED ACCOUNT IN OUR BEIRUT 2109 AND NOTED THAT I HAD JUST
HAD GENERAL KHOURY AND SEVERAL OF HIS SENIOR OFFICERS TO LUNCH AND
THEY WERE DEEPLY FRUSTRATED BY THEIR INACTION. I WONDERED WHETHER
LEBANESE ARMY COULD NOT PLAY A ROLE, PERHAPS REPLACING SYRIANS IN
AYN AR-RUMMANAH.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 02115 140853Z

2. BOTH SARKIS AND BOUTROS REACTED VERY NEGATIVELY, SAYING LEFT-
ISTS IN SHIYAH WOULD FIRE ON ARMY AS SOON AS IT ENTERED AREA, AND
THAT SECTARIAN TENSIONS WOULD QUICKLY TEAR ARMY APART. FURTHER-
MORE, IT WOULD BE VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE IN SYRIANS, WHO HAD MOVED
INTO AREA AT SARKIS' REQUEST. THEY WOULD PACK UP AND GO HOME, AND
THEN WE WOULD HAVE CIVIL WAR.

3. SARKIS EXPLAINED THAT SYRIANS HAD INTERVENED AT HIS SPECIFIC REQUEST, AND WITH AGREEMENT OF BOTH SIDES ONLY AFTER FIGHTING HAD BEEN GOING ON FOR ALMOST 48 HOURS. IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT THEY WOULD OCCUPY POSITIONS ON CONFRONTATION LINE, AND THAT AS NECESSARY THEY COULD MOVE INTO SIDE STREETS UP TO DISTANCE OF 50 METERS AND ESTABLISH POSTS. IN ONE SUCH STREET ON AYN AR-RUMMANAH SIDE OF LINE THEY HAD GONE IN 30 METERS AND, BY HAZARD, CAME TO A KATAEB OFFICE. KATAEB HAD OPENED FIRE WITHOUT WARNING AND KILLED FIVE SYRIANS IMMEDIATELY. FAT WAS THEN IN THE FIRE, AND THINGS HAD RAPIDLY GONE FROM BAD TO WORSE.

4. SYRIANS WERE NOT SEEKING REVENGE FOR FAYYADIYAH, NOR WERE PALESTINIANS OR LEFTISTS INVOLVED. CHRISTIAN SNIPERS WERE CONTINUING TO SHOOT AT SYRIANS, AND LATTER WERE RESPONDING WITH MEANS AT THEIR DISPOSAL (MEANING INDISCRIMINATE SHELLING WITH ROCKETS AND TANK ARTILLERY). PRESIDENT HAD JUST REACHED AGREEMENT WITH CHRISTIANS AND SYRIANS ON INTRODUCTION OF SUDANESE TROOPS OF ADF TO TAKE UP POSITIONS ON CHRISTIAN SIDE OF STREET, WHILE SYRIANS OCCUPIED MOSLEM SIDE. CHRISTIANS HAD NOTHING AGAINST SUDANESE, AND PRESIDENT HOPED THEY WOULD HOLD THEIR FIRE. SUDANESE WERE TO BE IN PLACE BY 1900, WHEN CEASE-FIRE WAS TO GO INTO EFFECT (IT DID). THEY DID NOT KNOW WHETHER THIS WOULD WORK. DID I HAVE ANY OTHER IDEAS?

5. I SAID IT NOT FOR ME TO GIVE LESSONS IN LEBANESE POLITICS TO PRESIDENT, BUT HIS PEOPLE NEEDED TO SEE SOME MANIFESTATION OF SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 02115 140853Z

HIM. THE COUNTRY WAS IN EXTREMIS, AND NO RESPONSIBLE LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT HAD APPEARED ON TV TO MAKE A STATEMENT. ANONYMOUS NEWS REPORTS DID NOT MEET PEOPLES' NEED FOR VIEW OF PRESIDENT AND GUIDANCE FROM HIM.

6. PRESIDENT SAID NOW WAS NOT THE TIME. PERHAPS IN A FEW DAYS. IF HE SPOKE NOW, HE WOULD HAVE TO DEFEND CHRISTIAN SIDE OR BE CRUCIFIED. HE COULD NOT CENSURE SYRIANS SEEING THAT IT WAS HE WHO HAD ORDERED THEM TO INTERVENE.

7. I ASKED HIM HOW MANY CASUALTIES THERE HAD BEEN. HE SAID HE WAS NOT SURE. PERHAPS 15 HAD BEEN KILLED THE DAY BEFORE. CASUALTIES WERE LOW IN PROPORTION TO AMOUNT OF FIRING BECAUSE EVERYONE HAD TAKEN TO SHELTERS.

8. BOUTROS THEN SAID THEY WOULD LIKE ME TO GO SEE PIERRE AND BASHIR GEMAYEL, TOGETHER, AND CAMILLE AND DANY CHAMOUN, ALSO TOGETHER, TO TELL THEM, IF I AGREED WITH HIM, THAT: 1) THIS WAS NO TIME TO START A WAR OF LIBERATION AGAINST THE SYRIANS. IF THE LATTER WITHDREW UNDER MILITARY PRESSURE FROM THE CHRISTIANS, THEY WOULD GIVE THE PLO ALL POSSIBLE HELP TO PERMIT IT TO CLEAN UP ON THE CHRISTIANS; 2) THAT THERE WAS NO PROSPECT OF INTERNATIONALIZ-

ING THE PROBLEM (CHAMOUN'S SOLUTION). THE UN WAS NOT GOING TO
SEND A PEACEKEEPING FORCE TO BEIRUT (ALTHOUGH IF WE THOUGHT THAT
WAS A POSSIBILITY, PLEASE LET HIM KNOW).

9. I AGREED TO DO SO AND AM OFF TO SEE GEMAYELS AT 1100 AND
CHAMOUNS AT 1230. AS OF 0900 THE CEASEFIRE IS HOLDING.
PARKER

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TROOP DEPLOYMENT, ARMED FORCES, CHRISTIANS, PALESTINIANS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, COMBAT OPERATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT02115
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780160-0648
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780458/aaaabwyl.tel
Line Count: 123
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d454a1b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2971265
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANON: PELION UPON OSSA
TAGS: PEPR, PBOR, MOPS, PINT, LE, IS, PLO, (SARKIS, ILYAS), (BOUTROS, FU'AD GEORGES), (PARKER, RICHARD B)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d454a1b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014